

## Stones That Weigh Us Down

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Summary: The Anchor lives in her blood now. It's a slow decay and it spreads to those around her " poisons those she loves. In the end, Solas regrets everything. Female Lavellan/Solas; Female Lavellan/Cassandra Pentaghost

## Stones That Weigh Us Down

And these are the stones that weigh us down: love, loss and religion.

**\*\*one.\*\***

When Lavellan is young, her Keeper gives her a rock. A small dark oval that fits in the palm of her hand. Lavellan keeps it in her pocket, always reaching in to make sure it is still there.

"It's a worry stone, child," her Keeper explains.

By the time Lavellan has finally been appointed the First to her Keeper, the stone has been worn smooth. They finish her \_vallaslin \_that night " elegant, complex markings honoring the great Mythal. Lavellan does not cry, does not flinch. This is her destiny. She is proud of her markings and her powers. She is the First and she is strong. Lavellan is so full of love. Mythal is her protector and her patron and even though she strives to please each Elven god, it is Mythal who she wishes to earn the blessing off.

She serves Mythal with her whole heart. Even when her Keeper sends her to spy on the Enclave "especially when the Keeper sends her away.

**\*\*two.\*\***

Cassandra almost hits her when her prisoner refuses to speak in a language she can understand.

"Tell me why we shouldn't kill you now. The conclave is destroyed. Everyone who attended â€" dead. Except for you." Lavellan says nothing at first. Then Cassandra grabs her; it is rough and there is a panic and pain in the Seeker's actions. "Explain this!" she spat and her shoulders shudder. She is hurting.

Lavellan yells back in elvish, bristling. It wasn't meant to happen like this. Her head hurts and she can't believe it. All those people... It comes as a shock to both Cassandra and Leliana. She spoke Elvish as best she can. It narrows down the clans she could have been from. It draws Leliana's interest; it infuriates Cassandra. A dead language but Lavellan knows enough â€" that was the last gift her Keeper gave her. She won't speak Trade. Not in front of these...outsiders.

"Speak plainly!" Cassandra growls again, but her voice is lower as if in defeat. Her grip loosens.

Lavellan straightens her shoulders, opens her mouth. She replies in elvish. Broken, incomplete like the language itself. She doesn't remember, she doesn't know and she's so so so sorry. It wasn't meant to happen like this. This wasn't what her Keeper wanted.

"Your lying!" Cassandra hisses, stepping back but her hand falls to the hilt of her sword. She has to be able to speak something else. She has to be able to give them answers. Leliana pulls her hand away.

"We need her, Cassandra."

Cassandra looks desperate and scared and Lavellan has to look away. There is a pause, brief and tense.

"Do you remember what happened?" Leliana asked finally.

Lavellan looks down and her shoulders shake. She tried to remember but there is just pieces. She says what she sees. Words fall out of her mouth, some Elvish, some Trade. There are bodies, a bright light. The Fade. And...and a woman? A mess as she tries to put the puzzle back together herself. She can't remember. Her head hurts. Cassandra stops her stammering with a strong but strangely gentle grasp on her arm (â€" the arm without the mark and that would be important later.)

"W-what did happen?" Lavellan asks. Her Trade is shaky at best but she pushes the words out with effort.

Cassandra sighs softly, trying to calm herself, "It...it will be easier to show you," she helps Lavellan stand and Lavellan realizes that she has to fix this. For her sake because this horrible mark on her hand burns and burns, but also for everyone's sake because there's a hole in the sky and it burns and burns.

**\*\*three.\*\***

As soon as they cut off her bindings, Lavellan reaches down and touched the rock her pocket. When they finally close the hole in the sky, there is an imprint to match her thumb in the stone. Worn smooth and different; just like her.

**\*\*four.\*\***

When Solas first responds to her elvish tongue in the same, Lavellan wrinkles her nose at him. He is is not Dalish. He does not deserve to know what she has to say. Her clan had worked hard, the hardest, to preserve this dying language. She would not share it. It is hers.

She doesn't talk at all for days. Varric nicknames her Gabby. But it is during this time that the Sickness starts to set in. The Anchor lives in her blood now. It is a slow decay, like a poison in her veins. Lavellan would never be the same again.

At first the changes scare Lavellan. The Anchor on her palm has stopped growing. Solas says it is stable. But it happens lowly, and if anyone notices, they don't say anything. Her eyes change to an angry color reminiscent of the rifts first. Her hair starts to lighten. Then it bled into her markings, changing the teal to green.

There is a dull aching pulse in her bones but the mark stops spreading and everyone worships her as a hero. But she is still scared. It is a slow sort of decay as it spreads through her veins. A kind of magic that only Solas seems to know about. No one says anything but Solas touches her short hair with a kind of jealous captivation. She had cut it as soon as it started to whiten. She hates it at first; didn't want to see what it has become. Solas, though, stands by her.

"Sometimes, things leave their mark on us," It is given as an explanation, but it explained nothing to her.

"I didn't ask for this! I don't want this!"

Solas looks hurt.

**\*\*five.\*\***

The black stone covered the angry hole in her palm perfectly. She clutches it and there is comfort in no longer being able to see the glowing scar. It is green cracks across her palm, under her skin and following her veins up her wrist. It had stopped growing. There is at least consolation in that for now.

**\*\*six.\*\***

Lavallen still remembers everyone asking if she believed she was chosen by Andraste. At first she always gave the same answer. She believes in Elven gods, not the Maker or Andraste. She could not be the Herald of Andraste.

It is Cassandra however who the first to ask, "And there's no room among those gods for one more?"

And that's when Lavallen first starts thinking and maybe Cassandra is more than just blunt and self-righteous. Cassandra is smart, intuitive. Lavallen finds herself actually reading the Chant of Light and the story of Andraste and the Maker the next few nights. It is strange and she was afraid it would anger her gods, but they remain

silent.

**\*\*seven.\*\***

She doesn't remember who approached who first. She wants help and Solas is more than willing to give it to her. He is fascinated by the Anchor on her hand and that fascination only grows as it begins to soak into her blood.

"I don't know how to control this, Solas."

He reaches for the marked hand. She flinches away.

"Dream with me. I will show you the ways of the Fade."

The first kiss is fleeting. A dream that Lavellan misses when she awakes. Solas makes her feel beautiful. She is no longer afraid. And even as a mage, she has never explored the Fade in the way he shows her. There is comfort there. She has more control there, and that is only enhanced by the Anchor. He teaches her to be strong and she respects him. She tries to have an open mind about his opinions but in the end, when he suggests that demons and blood magic aren't all she thinks they are, she feels her chest constrict.

She only winces when he touches her hand; but when Solas leans in to kiss her, Lavellan kisses back. Solas loves the Anchor on her hand â€" hates the marks on her face â€" what he feels about her is messy and blurred. They both know that it won't last, but for a time, they can be happy.

**\*\*eight.\*\***

Lavellan grows strong. Stronger even than Solas would have thought. He sees Rifts in her eyes. Sometimes he regrets what he has done to her. He has changed her. She denies it, but the knowledge that he is right (â€" always right) settles in her lungs. It's heavy.

**\*\*nine.\*\***

Everyone always wants to see the Mark, they always want to know if it hurts, if it bothers her. Solas likes to hold her hand (â€" the hand with the anchor of course). He likes to hear her talk. But sometimes he won't look her in the eyes. He's too busy staring at her hand. He wants to change her.

But Lavellan wants to change herself instead.

That is when she steps into the Well of Sorrows. While Morrigan argues with Solas and while Abelas stood to the side, she moves to the water. Ever since she was a child, she was told she was born to serve Mythal. So this Temple and this Well, they are her calling. They are her destiny and her duty. She hears yelling, first Morrigan and then Solas.

But despite it all, this is hers.

When it is all over, her head is pounding. She hears them though; hundreds of voices and she can't understand most of the words but they are there. Lavellan pushes herself up from the ground and

everyone rushes to help her. Her clothes are damp but the water is gone " soaked into her skin and her soul and it cools the burn of the Anchor. Solas holds back, doesn't run to her and there is fear " anger in his eyes. It is only for a brief moment before they have to run. They see the monster they have learned is their enemy and Lavellan is the first to stand up.

"Through the mirror!" She yells in Elvish because suddenly it's much less broken and both Morrigan and Solas translate for the rest of the party in anxious shouts.

Seeing the Eluvian activate at her own hands nearly brings her to tears. This is her destiny.

**\*\*ten.\*\***

After drinking from the Well, Lavellan is plagued with nightmares. Her head pounds and she sees things " war, chaos. She sees her death and she sees what it's like to loose. It can't happen. Lavellan clenches her jaw. The Fade is a terrifying place alone, she decides, especially now when she's plagued with voices that are not her own.

She touches her worry stone and it feels heavy; her shoulders feel heavy. There is a great weight on them. She rolls the stone over in her hand.

After she drank from the Well, she thought her beliefs would become clearer and she would be less conflicted. Because of this much power, Mythral had to be real, as did all the Elven gods. But when the voices spoke she couldn't tell if they were telling the tale of Andraste or Mythral (" "seeking the justice she was denied."\_)

Lavellan wonders if it even matters; whether she has Andraste and the Maker to add to her prayers or whether Andraste and the Maker are human names for those she already knows and worships. She isn't sure so she simply continues. She is the Herald of Andraste and a slave to Mythral.

**\*\*eleven.\*\***

Cassandra finds Inquisitor Lavellan in the sparring ring late one night. The Elf is practicing spells and the green magic lights up the whole courtyard like fireworks. At first, Cassandra just watches but she can tell that Lavellan's spells are messy. There is something else on the elf's mind. Cassandra slips out of the forge and into the courtyard.

"Has something happened?" Cassandra asks.

Lavellan lets her shoulders slump and closes her eyes. The green of her magic fizzles out against the training dummy and the two of them are left mostly in darkness.

"Solas...tried to explain something to me," she waved her hands, "Elf things. You probably aren't interested," her Trade had improved over the time but it was still a bit awkward on her tongue.

Cassandra tilts her head slightly, "I may not understand but talking about these things can help, Inquisitor. If you would like, I can

listen."

Lavellan had always thought herself alone but now, with Cassandra standing in front of her, she realizes, that had never been the case. Solas may have been the only one who understood the magic and the Anchor, but understanding, she realizes, is not always the same as being there for someone. You can not understand a thing, but still be there for them. Be there with them.

A small smile curls on Lavellan's lips and then she sighs. She sits down and starts to explain as best should could. Sometimes Elvish words slip in and she tries her best to translate them. She tells Cassandra that Solas had told her that her \_vallaslin, \_her pride and joy, where actually slave markings. Her voice quivers but she continues. She had refused, of course, the marks on her skin are a part of her now. Maybe it is time to let go of the old ways, preserve them as best they could, but perhaps, make their own way in life.

Solas had rose his voice, accused her thoughts and actions of not being her own \_(â€" "You are Mythal's creature now.")\_. It had hurt. Lavellan is quick to explain to Cassandra, though, that she still is herself, even with the voices clawing and scratching at the back of her skull. Cassandra puts a firm hand on her shoulder and squeezes. Lavellan smiles, standing. Perhaps Solas and her will never truly see eye-to-eye outside of the Fade, she thinks.

"I admire you, Cassandra," she says and the words are practiced, "You...You're the reason I am able to make these hard choices."

Cassandra is awe-struck for a moment and bites her lip. She smiles back.

**\*\*twelve.\*\***

Maybe, just once, Lavellan wants to sweep someone off their feet. Maybe not just anyone; Lavellan wants to woo Cassandra. It's a feeling that has been bubbling up inside her. Cassandra is strong and blunt and beautiful. Lavellan wants her to let her walls down. Lavellan wants to be everything Cassandra wants â€" needs.

Lavellan, though, is a bit unsure about...human rituals. She tries dropping hints, flirting and such; treating Cassandra as she would an elf from her clan. She thinks it may leave a bitter taste in her mouth but Cassandra is not like most humans. Lavellan thinks she may be in love. It had been a slow fall but it is something Solas had never made her feel. She loved, loves, Solas, but not in the same way. It's not the same.

Finally, Cassandra pulls her aside, her face flustered and at first Lavellan is worried she had gotten the wrong idea.

"You cannot court me, if that is your intention! It is impossible."

Lavellan cocks her head to side, "Why not?"

"You're the \_Inquisitor\_"

Lavellan laughs, "Is that all?" she leans back against the railing, "I would wish to try, if you could give me some advice."

**\*\*thirteen.\*\***

The voices never stop but Lavellan has no regrets. The Well and all of its knowledge was her's. But sometimes, she would grip her staff too hard. So hard the Anchor would ache and her \_vallaslin. \_They weren't just words and voices, but those powerful emotions that went with them. Sometimes her knees threaten to buckle.

Cassandra reaches out to her through the fog of pain and whispers that grow louder and louder. Cassandra grasps her arm, pulls her up and holds her face between two hands. There is a burning in her blood, but then, silence. For the time.

"Thank you," Lavellan whispers, first in Elvish and then again in Trade. Cassandra meets her eyes, making sure she is truly alright and her thumb traces the deep scar across Lavellan's cheek and lips. It is a tender moment, broken only by the reminder that they must fight.

**\*\*fourteen.\*\***

"Shit. Damn it. We save Ferelden, and their angry. We save Orlais, and their angry. We close the Breach, \_twice\_, and my own hand wants to kill me. Could one thing in this \_fucking\_ world just stay fixed?!"

And Lavellan misses the peace and quiet the past two years had given her. She misses Cassandra â€" always busy being Divine and she misses Solas. She had missed Varric's stories and Dorian's cockiness. But this wasn't how she wanted to get all of that back. The whispers in her head were louder â€" clearer now and they spoke of things she didn't want to hear.

The pain grows, spreads, as does the mark, clawing up her arm until it looks like spiderwebs around her elbow and following her veins.

**\*\*fifteen.\*\***

Lavellan had changed and it was beyond just the changes done by the Anchor. She had grown up. (â€"\_"Has it affected you? Changed you in anyway? Your mind, your morals, your...spirit?"\_) She had mastered the magic of a Keeper and her control of Rift and Fade magic was surprising. Her hair never went back to its natural colored and her eyes and \_vallaslin \_where stained and tainted forever. But Lavellan had embraced the storm within her.

Now, she is dangerous and vengeful but most of all she is willing to do what she must to protect those she loves. And she loves so much and so many. (\_â€"\_"The oldest accounts say Mythal was both of these, and neither. She was the Mother; protective and fierce."\_)

"If I live, I'm coming to stop you," Lavellan whispers, the pain growing up towards her shoulder, digging into her skin and her veins.

"I know. Take my hand." In the end, Solas regrets everything but there is no going back, no changing his mind.

**\*\*sixteen.\*\***

"There's worse coming than anything you've yet seen, so we'll play nice. We'll bow. But not to you."

Cassandra " \_Divine Victoria \_smiles, beaming with approval.

**\*\*seventeen.\*\***

Lavellan touches the stone in her pocket, and then, removed it. Her and Cassandra stand, staring at the scar left by the Breach. Cassandra looks down at the rock in her hand. Then, Lavellan throws it off the Balcony of the Winter Palace, they both watch the black stone tumble before disappearing. Cassandra reaches for her only hand, now empty, and gives it a squeeze.

Then, with no worry stone and no Anchor, Lavellan has no more stones to hold her down.

End  
file.